Import of Gas for setting up Power Projects in Gujarat

*26 SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a)whether it is a fact that it has been decided to import gas to establish gas based power projects in Gujrat;

(b)if so, the details of quantity of gas to be imported and the electricity generated; and

by when the plant would be set-up?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY): (a) There is no decision to import gas specifically for establishing gas based power project in Gujarat. It has been decided to encourage import of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to meet natural gas demands from various sectors including the Power Sector.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir

*27. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a)whetner it is a fact that the incidents of terrorist infiltration have increased across the Jammu and Kashmir border in recent times;

(b)if so, the details in this regard;

(c)what action has been taken to overcome infiltration; and

(d)if reply to part (a) above be in the negative, how much decrease in the number of infiltration has taken place?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L. K. ADVANI): (a) and (b) While it is not possible to give exact figures of the number of infiltrators who have crossed into Jammu & Kashmir recently, the total number of militants who have been apprehended and killed during the period from January, 1998 upto 15th May, 1998 is indicated below:—

	Appr	ehended	Killed
January		48	52
February		94	56
March		88	39
April		59	62
Upto 15th May		62	9
TOTAL:		351	218

(c) and (d) The Security forces are keeping close surveillance along the Line of Control/liiternational Border. Night vision devices are being used for keeping watch. Patrolling has been intensified. Close coordination is being maintained between the security and the intelligence agencies to prevent infiltration/exfiltra-tion. The Village Defence Committees have been strengthened. The arrangements are being reviewed periodically.

Thorium-Based Nuclear Power Plant

*28. SHRI K. M. SAIFULLAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a)whether Indian scientists have developed any new technology to use thorium as a fuel for power generation in nuclear reactors; and

(b)if so, the time by which the thorium-based nuclear power plant is likely to be put into operation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir. With research and development (R&D) work carried out over the years in the research reactors at Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Trom-bay, Thorium has been successfully converted into Uranium (233). The reprocessing of Uranium (233) from the irradiated Thorium rods also has been carried out both at the BARC and the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR),

Kalpakkam. The R&D work of the Department of Atomic Energy in the field of nuclear power generation is oriented towards a long-term strategy involving three stages, namely, the current generation of pressurised heavy water reactors as the first stage, plutonium-fuelled fast breeder reactors as the second stage and reactors operating on the Uranium (233)-Thorium fuel cycle as the third stage.

(b) The advanced heavy water reactor, designed to produce most of its energy from Thorium, is under engineering development at present. The question of setting up of power plant(s) based on such reactors can be decided only at a later stage.

Development of fisheries in hilly districts of Uttar Pradesh

*29. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a)whether a proposal for development of fisheries in hilly districts of Uttar Pradesh has been received by Government and considered; and

(b)if so, the details and the status thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) The Government of India have received a project proposal from the Government of Uttar Pradesh in May, 1996 for seeking external assistance for the development of Trout Fish Farming in the hilly areas of the State. The Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance have informed that the proposal was posed to the French authorities for assistance under the Indo-French Financial Protocol in April, 1998, but the French authorities were of the view that since the proposal does not meet the technical and structural parameters required for eligibility, they cannot consider the proposal under the Indo-French Financial Protocol.

However, development of fish farming in the hilly region of Uttar Pradesh is already covered under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme on "Development of Freshwater Aquaculture".

Protest by China on Defence Minister's Remarks

*30. SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a)whether Prople's Republic of China has protested against the remarks of India's Defence Minister describing China as the number one threat to India; and

(b)if so, what has been the response of Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) The Chinese side have conveyed, with reference to the Raksha Mantri's statements pertaining to China's military capabilities and potential, that there has been improvement in India-China relations in recent years and denied that China posed a threat to India. The Chinese side expressed the hope that the Indian Government would take necessary measures to prevent recurrence of such incidents so as to facilitate the sound and smooth growth of Sino-Indian relations.

^We have pointed out to the Chinese side that we attach importance to friendly relations with China. The two sides have agreed to build a constructive and cooperative relationship oriented towards the 21st century. We seek a relationship in which the two sides would be responsive to each other's concerns. Our concerns have been made known to the Chinese side. We remain committed to the process of dialogue to resolve outstanding differences. We seek to develop a friendly, cooperative, good neighbourly and mutually beneficial relationship with China, our largest neighbour.